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Third session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers

Addis Ababa, 5-14 March 1984

AFRICAN STATISTICAL SERVICES

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INTRODUCTION

1. This paper is presented at the request of the ninth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers in April 1983, which, in adopting resolution 469 (XVIII) on African statistical services, felt that the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers should further examine the whole question of how to meet African statistical needs. The matter has become of increasing concern in the following way.

2. It has been apparent for some years that, although African statistical services are continuing to make progress and a few of them are doing very well, statistics in many countries are not performing the role that would be expected after a quarter of a century of independence. At the same time it has to be noted that African economic and social planning continues to be of a pragmatic rather than technical nature.

3. These two considerations are of course inter-dependent. Planning cannot make technical progress until adequate basic data are available, and pragmatic planning not based on extensive data analysis perpetuates a low demand for data. There is then stagnation unless some other factor intervenes to promote more effective activity.

4. It could have been expected that the 1973 oil crisis and subsequent economic difficulties would serve as such a factor by making developing countries aware of the need to compete more intensively in a changing global economic situation. There has certainly been plenty of international discussion on this topic through UNCTAD, the Group of 77, special meetings of the UN General Assembly to propose a new international economic order, etc. Surprisingly, none of this has led to any real change in national statistical and planning activities, which would have enabled individual countries and groups of countries to assess their own economic situations within the global context, thus providing a better basis for effective action. Perhaps it is reasonable to conclude that too much reliance has been placed on international negotiations, without realizing that the success of such efforts depends on supporting activity at national level.

5. It was, in fact, in the mid-1970s that deficiencies in planning and statistics became more apparent in many African countries. The impact of world economic problems, instead of serving as a challenge to evaluation and planning, seems to have impeded them and other more local problems have made the situation worse.

6. Technical assistance arrangements in statistics may also have contributed to the problem of countries. At the beginning of the 1970s, UNDP had a financial crisis at the same time as UNFPA was establishing its activities. In many countries, it resulted in a significant shift of work from economic to demographic statistics. Thus, when economic conditions deteriorated in 1973 and good economic data and analysis would have been useful, statistical services were being encouraged to concentrate on the mainly internal matter of population censuses through the largest international statistical operation ever mounted.

7. The deficiency in planning and statistics has been associated with and to some extent contributed to two kinds of problems. Firstly, there has been a serious deterioration in the economic and social conditions of some African countries, with very little progress in most of the remainder. The global economic situation, droughts, wars, etc. are usually given full

blame for the shortfall in progress, but the point being made here is that their effects could have been greatly reduced by better planning and data services.

8. Secondly, African and other developing countries have placed themselves at a disadvantage in north-south, south-south and any other kind of international negotiation, simply because they do not know enough about their own economic and social conditions and the related causes. No one can hope to win an argument if the other side has made better preparation.

9. The problem now is to improve the situation and the present paper is concerned specifically with action needed in respect of national statistical services, as a basis for more effective and technical national planning. It should be understood that, in the context of the paper, planning is not confined to the work of ministries responsible for drafting and monitoring development plans. In many countries, ministries of finance and central banks have a predominant position. It is also necessary to take into account the planning activities of ministries concerned with specific areas of economic and social development.

RECENT ACTION

First session of the Joint Conference

10. Action has been going ahead for some time to ameliorate the situation outlined above. At its first session in 1980, the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers had the task of preparing recommendations for submission to the first African economic summit through the ECA Conference of Ministers. The joint conference made the following recommendations of direct concern to national statistical services.

(a) As a matter of urgency, African countries must strengthen their statistical infrastructures as a basis for effective policy-making and planning. In this connection they are urged to formulate statistical development programmes and these should be included in national development plans. These programmes should incorporate a list of data requirements in line with needs and priorities;

(b) In order to mobilize external resources for the implementation of the African Household Survey Capability Programme, the 1980 round of Population and Housing Censuses and the System of National Accounts, African Governments should reaffirm their priorities in these programmes and provide the necessary counterpart financial support;

(c) Each Government should institute appropriate mechanisms for the evaluation and analysis of data. These mechanisms should ensure proper linkages between data collectors, analysts and users;

(d) It is desirable that a statistical data base for the storage and retrieval of information be established in individual countries.

11. The preparatory committee which met immediately after the joint conference deleted the last recommendation on the grounds that it was a general problem affecting all disciplines and not particularly confined to the field of statistics. The ECA Conference of Ministers endorsed the recommendations in their amended form. The OAU Economic Summit approved the recommendations on statistics without further amendment.

Working group on statistical organization and manpower

12. The first session of the joint conference also requested a working group on statistical organization and manpower, which met in 1981 under the sponsorship of the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA). It thoroughly examined all aspects of statistical development and its report is available in document ST/ECA/PSD.2/18. Some of its main conclusions on the organization and development of statistical services are summarised in the following paragraphs.

13. Although theworking group agreed that progress achieved by national statistical services has been less than desirable, it observed that their state of development must to a large extent reflect the development of civil services and countries as a whole. It should not be assumed that statistics are lagging far behind other activities, althouth in some countries this is certainly the case.

14. The group said that co-ordination is a primary factor in accelerating statistical development, particularly when the work is dispersed on a geographical basis or between subject ministries. It strongly urged that more countries should make use of national statistics committees and pointed out that these committees must have sufficient authority to ensure satisfactory impact. In addition to continuing co-ordination and monitoring, one of the main functions of such a committee would be the preparation of a statistical development programme for incorporation in the national development plan. Nevertheless, the statistics committees should not be seen as a panacea to all problems. National statistical services must themselves create confidence through the timely production of results. They must also take all possible steps to promote awareness of the need for statistics.

15. It was recommended that the work programmes of statistical services should not be confined to the routine collection and dissemination of data, but should be extended to the more imaginative use of data for evaluation and monitoring and a close involvement in data analysis, including the preparation of annual economic surveys, etc. The group also believed that continuity is essential to the success of a work programme and that it has to be achieved through the efforts of local staff rather than foreign experts.

16. Particular stress was placed on the need for a satisfactory balance between subjects in statistical programme, which might be considered in the context of a national policy for information and analysis. However the structure of a statistical service should be as simple and flexible as possible and the group was somewhat against the creation of special technical units, e.g. in designing surveys.

17. The close links between statistical and planning agencies, which exist in most countries, were generally considered to be an advantage. If a statistical service can become involved in the planning process, through the provision of appropriate data and active participation in its analysis, it is likely to develop more quickly.

18. There were somewhat mixed feelings among the group about the usual claim that statisticians have a status inferior to that of many other government officials. Salary considerations may in fact be less important than the provision of appropriate training and interesting work.

19. The group was not opposed to the decentralised statistical arrangements in many African countries, but it did believe that some form of control is necessary, e.g. through the outposting of statisticians from the central statistical service. The location of the central service itself normally in the planning ministry, was not considered specially important. The primary requirement is that it should handle its own budget and accounts and have reasonable freedom of action. The group pointed out that the extent to which this freedom is achieved depends more on the quality of leadership in the statistical service than on any formal arrangement.

20. The group felt that the question of statistical legislation was more complex than envisaged in the working paper provided by the secretariat. It did agree that statistical laws should be kept as simple as possible, but their content would necessarily vary with the size of countries and their administrative structures.

21. Data processing and dissemination was agreed to be one of the most serious constraints in African statistical development and it is now a complex problem. The group examined the details at some length and its main conclusions were that statistical services must be responsible for their own data processing arrangements, and that there must be a satisfactory balance in their work between the collection of data and its processing. The latter may often require the decentralization of some editing and coding activity, particularly in the case of field surveys.

22. The group concluded its discussion on statistical organization by requesting the ECA secretariat to take necessary follow-up action and provide illustrative material which could be adapted for application in particular countries. Other topics considered were the means of deciding priorities within a statistical programme, staff development, research and analysis, and technical assistance, which are not of direct concern in the present paper.

Second session of the Joint Conference

23. The report of the working group was duly presented to the joint conference in 1982, but in the context of STPA rather than as a separate agenda item. This was unfortunate because the working group had performed well, but necessary because the agenda was overloaded. Nevertheless the joint conference approved the report and requested follow-up action.

Ninth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers

24. The full report of the working group was not suitable for presentation in the heavy agenda of the ninth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers, which was also the eighteenth session of the Economic Commission for Africa and its silver jubilee anniversary. There were also developments after the meeting of the working group to be taken into account.

25. All recent conclusions were therefore summarised and presented in a short working document. The preparatory committee of the Conference of Ministers complained that it was too short, but it nevertheless led to the adoption of ECA resolution 469 (XVIII) which will hopefully be of some help in drawing attention to the need for statistics at national level and in showing how national efforts to improve statistics can best be supported by international and bilateral agencies.

SUMMARY OF SUBSTANTIVE AND PRACTICAL ISSUES

26. After the 1981 working group on statistical organization and manpower, two considerations emerged more clearly. The first was that it is really not sufficient to regard data analysis as the essential link between data producers and users. It is necessary to go one step further and look at data applications. If a fairly clear and detailed idea can be formed of how data will be used, it becomes much easier to decide what kinds of analytical work are necessary and also what data should be collected. Initially this may require a special effort to identify applications, but in the longer term there should be feedback from actual data uses to facilitate the planning of statistical operations.

27. Secondly, it appeared from a number of country missions that available statistical resources are not always fully utilized. In a few countries there is a distinct management problem which needs to be rectified.

28. These two considerations and all earlier conclusions were taken into account when describing the position to the Conference of Ministers in document E/ECA/CM.9/11. However, for simplicity, the more detailed organizational matters considered earlier by the working group were not included.

Constraints on statistical development

29. African Governments have invariably affirmed the importance of statistical information but the priority given to collection, processing, analysis and use of data remains low. There is still a preference for more visible projects in both government budgets and external aid programmes.

30. In the absence of a consistent effort to improve the supply of data, Governments have adopted a pragmatic and non-technical approach to planning, which itself perpetuates a low demand for data.

Unfortunately this approach has not proved satisfactory and developing countries have found it difficult to compete in the adverse trading conditions of the present global recession and to achieve effective internal economic and social structures. In addition it has to be noted that some people still genuinely believe that quantitative data are not necessary for planning purposes.

31. No one would claim that better statistics can supply a complete answer to current problems but at least they can put the problems in their proper perspective and help in examining their causes.

32. The low priority attached to quantitative information has had a notably adverse effect on many national statistical services. One problem is a continuing brain drain at the professional level which has not been offset by the training of new staff. Staff losses at the senior level have led to management weaknesses which have resulted in underutilization of available statistical resources. This is the main cause of late data delivery, particularly from surveys, and has itself discouraged governments from taking greater interest in statistical development.

33. In a situation where they are not receiving active encouragement, many heads of statistical services have tended to concentrate on day-to-day work, neglecting the establishment of contacts with other government organizations and with the local representatives of international and bilateral agencies. This has placed many statistical services in a relatively poor position to claim priority in the allocation of government budget resources and in external assistance programmes. To have any influence on these arrangements requires a continuing effort through regular contact with the appropriat people.

34. Two other problems should also be noted. An additional factor leading to the slow production of statistics is a bottleneck at the data processing stage which arises largely because statisticians have not kept themselves adequately informed of rapidly developing computer technology. The result is a separation of the data collection and processing functions, with additional organizational problems and an uneven flow of work.

35. There is also a problem of separation at the international level. Various different agencies are responsible for providing technical assistance in their own fields of activity and, in spite of efforts by the United Nations Statistical Commission, the work is not always co-ordinated as well as it should be. In addition, international statistical recommendations tend to stop short at the data processing and tabulation stage and do not give enough guidance on data analysis and applications which have to be regarded as a separate issue.

36. The over-all position in the light of the foregoing comments is that there is certainly an awareness of the need for quantitative information but its production and use is by no means satisfactory. The faults lie with both the producer and the users of data and a special initiative is needed to accelerate the process of statistical development. This need not be very expensive and the main lines of action are outlined in the next secton.

Improvement of African Statistics

37. The action needed to ensure faster development of national statistical services can be classified fairly easily into three groups which indicate the responsibility for such action: the government, the national statistical service itself and international agencies. However it must again be emphasized that conditions differ widely between countries and the steps to be taken in each country have to be worked out on an individual basis.

A. The Government

38. Much greater emphasis should be placed on the end-product of statistical operations, which is data applications. If the ways in which statistics will be used for specific purposes can be properly identified, it becomes much easier to determine the kinds of analysis to be carried out and, in turn, the processing and data collection requirements. It is appreciated that there is an interaction between the supply and use of data because additional applications emerge when new data become available; but a conscious effort to identify the applications can do much to accelerate the production of data.

39. In order to do their work satisfactorily, statistical services must have an adequate supply of trained personnel. Progress is already being made in this connection through the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) and a detailed study of statistical organization and training needs is being undertaken in collaboration with the European Economic Community (EEC). However training alone is not sufficient and Governments must have a good working environment, which means that their assignments have to be challenging and interesting.

40. Data processing facilities and other supporting resources (paper, printing, transport, etc.) must be assured to avoid operational delays in data production. In one African country recently, work on foreign trade statistics was halted for lack of paper for computer printouts. Such problems derive not so much from budgetary constraints as from inefficient procurement.

41. In order to view statistical activities in their proper perspective and assign a clearly understood priority to the work, countries should prepare statistical development programme and incorporate them in their national development plans. This is an important recommendation of the Lagos Plan of Action and has implications for the local financing of national statistical activities. It should be borne in mind that the cost of statistical services in Africa, when developed effectively and including f field survey organizations, is not likely to exceed 0.5 per cent of the central government budget.

42. The statistical development programme should specify the objectives to be achieved during the period of the national plan and the means by which this will be done. In addition the programme should provide a basis for monitoring the performance of the statistical service. It is necessary to check continuously on the implementation of new developments and on whether outputs are delivered in good time.

43. To ensure that the most effective use is made of data, government planning agencies, both centralized and in specific ministries, should be encouraged to adopt a more systematic and technical approach to their work, which would also overcome the disadvantages of the present ad hoc pragmatic planning arrangements. It follows that better training of planners has to be considered along with the training of statisticians.

B. National statistical service

44. More use should be made of national statistics committees for the planning and co-ordination of activities and for the preparation of realistic and integrated statistical development programmes. One of the aims of these committees should be to improve day-to-day contact between statistical services, their user clients and the suppliers of data.

45. Statistical services must demonstrate the ability to issue regular statistical publications and reports on surveys, etc., in a timely manner. In many countries this requires an improvement in managerial performance rather than additional resources and is essential for gaining government confidence in statistics. It can moreover be achieved through the preparation of annual work programmes within the context of the statistical development programme.

46. To help in overcoming existing serious delays in the production of data there should be increasingly close involvement of statisticians in computerized data processing. This has to be dealt with in both basic training and subsequent courses, as well as generally in working arrangements.

C. International agencies

47 In organizing external assistance, a more integrated approach is required in examining the statistical needs of individual countries comprehensively instead of treating the various subject fields as separate entities, e.g. the existing special interests in price, national accounts and environment data. There is thus need for further improvement in interagency co-ordination, but it should be noted that multi-subject programmes such as the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) and data needed for rural development are an additional strong integrating factor. More use could be made of the United Nations regional commisions in achieving a properly consolidated account of the situation and requirements in individual countries.

48. International statistical recommendations should be extended beyond data collection, processing and tabulation to encompass data analysis and applications. Again this implies a co-ordinated inter-agency effort and would greatly assist Governments in achieving a clearer understanding of data uses and the need for statistics.

49. The resolution adopted by the Conference of Ministers is reproduced below.

Resolution 4c9 (XVIII). African statistical services[24/]

The Conference of Ministers

Aware of the urgent need to improve economic and social policy formulation planning, administration and analysis in the context of the Lagos Plan of Action 25/ which aims to promote African development through collective self-reliance,

Recognizing that the effective organization of these activities requires adequate quantitative information at the national, subregional and regional levels,

Noting that many African statistical services are not yet able to supply this information in a satisfactory and timely manner because of significant interrelated constraints which include low data demand for non-technical planning, statistical brain drain, management weaknesses, data processing difficulties and failure to regard data applications as a principal guide in organizing data collection, processing and analysis,

Further noting that there is still a lack of co-ordination in external assistance to statistics and international recommendations in this field do not adequately cover data analysis and applications,

1. Urges Governments of the region to:

(a) Accord higher priority generally to the improvement and strengthening of their statistical services so as to provide data which will assist in assessing current economic and social problems and in accelerating development;

(b) Identify data applications as a basis for determining priorities for data collection and analysis in each subject field;

(c) Utilize fully available training facilities to provide staff for statistical services and ensure that these services are efficiently managed;

(d) Take steps to overcome existing data processing difficulties through the provision of adequate equipment and by ensuring that statistical personnel play a more direct and active role in computerized data processing;

(e) Make increasing use of national statistics co-ordinating organs for the planning and co-ordination of activities and for the preparation of realistic and integrated statistical development programmes, which should be incorporated in national development plans as recommended by the Lagos Plan of Action;

24/ See chapter III, section C, paragraphs 289 to 295.
25/ A/S-11/14, annex I.

(f) Within the context of their development programmes, ensure that statistical services prepare annual work programmes for issuing regular publications and reports on surveys, etc. and for conducting other activities in a timely manner;

(g) Encourage both central planning agencies and those dealing with particular subject fields to adopt a more technical and analytical approach to plan preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review;

2. Recommends that the United Nations and its specialized agencies should:

(a) Continue existing efforts to co-ordinate technical co-operation in all aspects of quantitative information;

(b) Extend international statistical recommendations to include guidelines on data analysis and applications;

3. Appeals to inter-governmental agencies, multilateral and bilateral organizations to:

(a) Continue to assist in strengthening the operation of statistical infrastructure in the region;

(b) Support activities designed to improve the utilization of statistical data for development;

4. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission to take all necessary steps to assist the improvement of African statistics along the lines indicated above.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION

50. Follow-up action on the resolution has already been initiated with international agencies by the secretariat in respect of some specific projects. A full report on developments will be given when the joint conference meets.

51. A more formal presentation of the resolution was made at the seventeenth session of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities in June 1983. As the sub-committee is an inter-agency body, the points of concern were the requests for improved co-ordination of technical co-operation and the extension of international statistical recommendations to include guidance on data analysis and applications. The requests were reasonably well received in spite of the additional work they entail. The sub-committee also stressed that the improvement of statistics is very much dependent on the commitment of individual countries. Further action over quite a long period of time will be needed to ensure satisfactory implementation of the requests.

52. The resolution was also presented in June 1983 at a meeting of the steering committee which considered the draft report on the EEC/ACP/ECA study on statistical training needs in Africa. It can serve as a useful basis for a further joint effort to develop training in the region and to overcome some of the statistical manpower problems.

53. Action to be taken at national level is essentially a matter for consideration by the joint conference. The necessary steps are outlined in paragraphs 38 - 46 above and it is clear that they are mainly of an internal nature to be implemented, where necessary, by individual Governments on a self-reliant basis. However it should be noted that the ECA statistical programme is geared to supporting the kind of action envisaged and assistance will be given within the limits of available resources.

54. Finally, it is necessary to bear in mind that, although very careful thought has been given to the identification of constraints on African statistical development and the related remedies, the conclusions are still of a tentative nature. A continuing dialogue is needed within the region if all problems are to be solved satisfactorily. At its third session, the joint conference may wish to contribute new or revised ideas in respect of the substantive and practical issues.

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Third Session of the Joint Conference of
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Addis Ababa, 5-14 March 1984

TRAINING OF AFRICAN SPECIALISTS IN PLANNING, STATISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHY

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TRAINING OF AFRICAN SPECIALISTS IN PLANNING, STATISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHY

I. Introduction

1. In recognition of the need to achieve measures of self-reliance in the economic and other spheres, the Summit of the African Heads of States and governments stressed the importance of trained manpower as an input to activities in the various production sectors and support services. In fact, Africa's greatest asset is its human resources. Thus full mobilization and effective utilization of the labour force for national development and social progress should be a major instrument of development. Given the immense nature of the task of training to be accomplished with regard to training, lack of training facilities in some fields and scarcity of financial resources, the Summit recommended meaningful co-operation among member States in developing and utilizing specialized regional, subregional and multinational training and research institutions for training nationals in specialized skill areas, using wherever possible, existing national institutions as a base.

2. It is in this spirit, that it was felt that there was a strong need for the establishment of training institutions which could help African countries collectively to develop their capabilities and infrastructure essential in the field of planning, statistics and demography. This joint paper was recommended by the Second Session of Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers to highlight the main issues of training of specialists in these fields, to pin-point the problems which prevent the regional institutions in these fields to properly implement their goals and to sketch their prospects in the future.

II. Training of specialists in planning

2.1 Objectives

3. There are several centres in Africa in charge of training specialists in planning, but the most important is the Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) located in Dakar (Senegal). IDEP was established nearly two decades ago by the United Nations under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Its objectives are:

- To transmit the various and alternative theories and techniques with appropriate assessment, qualifications, extension and modifications to as to suit African development planning;
- To train African planners in analysis and research of the problems of African development, and;
- To provide advisory services to African governments in the areas of economic development and planning.

4. The Institute is to draw its trainees from among the serving officers of the Ministries, Departments and Commissions of National Planning. African planners are trained to be able to influence decisions on the question of Africa's dependence, independence, or interdependence, or Africa's monoculturism, diversification or specialization in her own economic interest.

5. The recent changes in the objectives and rationale of the Institute's activities aim among other things at assigning to IDEP a more substantive and effective role in the design, monitoring and implementation of African regional, subregional and national development strategies and objectives whether sectoral or comprehensive as spelt out inthe Lagos Plan of Action.

2.2 Training facilities

6. To achieve the above objectives, IDEP carries out a training cycle of two year's duration leading to an M.A. degree in development planning. The cycle is divided into three autonomous yet interrelated parts viz.

(i) The nine-month basic programme in development and planning

7. The main purpose of this programme is to train participants in how to plan and design policies in general at macro sectoral and project levels. The whole programme contents include basic economics and courses introducing trainees to overall economic conditions in Africa. Candidates who successfully complete the programmes will be awarded the IDEP diploma in development and planning. Others are given certificates of attendance.

(ii) The three-month specialization programmes

8. The programmes aim at providing specialized, more advanced training in certain areas, sectors or disciplines which are of particular importance to Africa. More emphasis is given to operational tools and techniques to concrete studies and empirical investigations.

(iii) The six-month research training programmes

9. Under this programme, M.A. candidates are trained in research methods through the preparation of a research monograph under the supervision of the Institute's staff. In this regard, planning and policy design related research, applied to Africa is particularly emphasized and encouraged in this programme.

2.3. Requisite inputs and problems encountered

(i) Staff

10. For IDEP to function effectively, the number of the teaching and research staff at all levels must reach the equivalent of 10 man-year generally, i.e. about double the present level. Presently, the Institute's work is seriously hampered if not rendered impossible by insufficient teaching staffs and research assistants, documentalists, library staff, data processors, etc.

(ii) Finance

11. One of the most leading constraints on the implementation of IDEP's goals has been the inadequacy of financial resources. This is so not only in terms of the quality of financial resource in flows, but also in terms of its overtime stability. Financial resources fluctuate widely from one year to the other, and within each year there is no guarantee of the timing of their actual receipt of funds. The most recent crisis in which IDEP finds itself in is the drastic reduction of UNDP contribution which amounted to $1.3 million and $1 million in 1982 and 1983 respectively and will be only $750,000 in 1984. On the other hand government contributions are not compensating such a drop. Under such circumstances, planning of the Institute's activities in a steady and sustainable fashion becomes a hazardous task with a great detriment to the quantity as well as quality of its services.

(iii) Material infrastructures

12. The Institute is presently located in an old building which does not lend itself to comfortable working conditions. If infrastructural facilities were expanded as planned, IDEP could have a student population of 100 or more. Moreover, the Institute lacks equipment such as printing and computer facilities.

(iv) Recognition of Institute's academic degrees

13. The problem of the classification of IDEP's Diplomas in African civil services and that of their recognition by African Universities and other national or international research institutions are still far from being solved. Therefore, a set of institutional arrangements must be initiated to define and work out the modalities and basis for strengthening relations between the Institute and the universities and centres with the aim of enabling IDEP to play an effective role in the latter's activities in training and research in the field of socio-economic development and planning.

(v) Lack of fellowships

14. The other important constraint faced by IDEP is finance to support the student's travel and living allowances. The fellowship funds which had to be provided by the African governments under trainee support schemes are slow in coming as they are released on a year-to-year basis and usually at the last moment. Furthermore, governments are reluctant to use their respective IPFs to provide fellowships to their nationals.

2.4. Prospects

15. The Institute's programmes are based on its five-year plan 1982-1986 which was approved by the ECA Conference of African Planners and Ministers in 1982. The Plan which is based on the aspirations of Africa's leaders as set down in the Lagos Plan of Action and the Monrovia Strategy aims at expanding the IDEP programmes both horizontally and vertically in order to maximize its contributions to the above mentioned objectives in its areas of competence. This is to be realized through a closer tailoring of the Institute's multiple activities particularly training, research and advisory services to the African continent's needs and objectives at both country and multicountry levels as pertaining to the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action.

16. As regards training, in addition to basic planning course, and requirements, greater emphasis is placed on new sectoral thrusts (namely industrialization in Africa, energy and development in Africa, agriculture and food, human resources and manpower) as well as on the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action and the assessment of alternative means of realizing them. Similarly in the fields of research the institute's programme aims at playing a greater role in contributing to areas which are of interest in the acceleration of the implementation of the Lagos Plan. As for advisory services, the Institute will assist both African countries and institutions in their efforts aiming at defining their roles and the implementation of the Plan at sectoral and macro-levels, at the country and multicountry levels.

17. However, the implementation of this five-year plan is to be undertaken in collaboration with other interested African Institutions, particularly ECA and ADB and with African research institutes. This would not only avoid any duplication of efforts but would also allow IDEP to benefit from the substantive external economies inherent in collaborative efforts.

III. Overview of the training of specialists in statistics

3.1. Objectives

18. It should be recalled that the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) is part of the continuing African efforts to provide opportunities for the training of adequate numbers of qualified staff required to collect, process and analyse the statistics needed for economic and social development. The STPA was adopted by the tenth session of the Conference of African Statisticians in 1977 and became formally established by resolution 9, 300 (XVIII) of the ECA Conference of Ministers in 1978. It was formulated as a 10-year programme which aims at making African self-reliant through:

- producing an increased number of statistical personnel,
- improving and maintaining the quality of statistical personnel already in service.

19. These aims are to be achieved by providing operational support to the participating centres with a view to:

- improving their efficiency,
- developing their courses along more practical lines,
- and ensuring that they become self-supporting.

20. The STPA is a co-ordinated effort between African Governments and relevant institutions on the one hand, and bilateral and multilateral agencies and institutions as well as intergovernmental organizations on the other hand. Its operational activities include:

(i) The provision of adequate numbers of student fellowships for training at the participating centres;

(ii) The support of all statistical training institutions of a regional or sub-regional nature through the provision of fellowships for training of trainers, the recruitment of lecturers and short-term consultants, the

provision of equipment, the assistance in the expansion of facilities and the co-operative development of teaching programmes, particularly by strengthening co-operation among the various training centres;

(iii) The provision of assistance to countries in establishing middle level statistical training programmes;

(iv) The provision of special assistance to African Portuguese-speaking countries in the field of statistical training;

(v) The appropriate dissemination of information on statistical training activities including annual surveys of activities of centres participating in the STPA which cover information on number of students, curricula review, financing and any associated problems.

21. There exists at ECA a regional mechanism which has the overall responsibility for co-ordinating the STPA. Meetings of directors of participating centres both inside and outside the region are convened by ECA once every two years for discussions on programme organization, development of curricula, the need for specialized courses, financial problems, etc.

3.2. Training facilities available and their adequacy

22. The STPA comprises presently 15 member centres and 5 associate centres. The 15 member centres are the following:

English-speaking centres

- Department of Statistics, University College of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana
- Department of Statistics, University of Ibadan, Nigeria
- Department of Statistics and Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
- Department of Statistics, National University of Lesotho, Roma, Lesotho
- Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre (EASTC), University of Dar-es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania
- Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE), Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda
- Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), Legon, Ghana

French-speaking centres

- Centre européen de formation des statisticiens économiste des pays en développement (CESD), Paris, France
- Collège statistique, Ecole nationale d'économie appliquée, Dakar, Senegal
- Ecole nationale supérieure de statistique et d'économie appliquée (ENSEA), Abidjan, Ivory Coast

- Institut africain et mauricien de statistique et d'économie appliquée (IASEA), Kigali, Rwanda
- Institut national de statistique et d'économie appliquée (INSEA), Rabat, Morocco
- Institut de statistique, de planification et d'économie appliquée (ISPEA), Yaoundé, Cameroon
- Institut des techniques de planification et d'économie appliquée (ITPEA), Algiers, Algeria
- Institut de formation et de recherche démographiques (IFORD), Yaoundé, Cameroon

23. RIPS and IFORD are basically demographic training centres but they were admitted as members of STPA in 1982 on the recommendation of the second session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers.

24. The 5 associate STPA centres are the following:

- Centre for Advanced Training in Applied Statistics for Developing Countries, Munich, Federal Republic of Germany
- Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague, Netherlands
- Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, United Kingdom
- Applied Statistics Research Unit, University of Kent, United Kingdom
- International Statistical Programmes Center (ISPC), Bureau of the Census, Washington, United States of America.

25. The associate centres offer specialized short-term training courses and seminars for practising statisticians. Other statistical training facilities are also available within the region but they are mainly for national use. There exists about ten of them in Nigeria.

26. According to the information available to ECA, for the next ten years at least the STPA centres will need to increase their output by about half. To meet the output requirements, it will be necessary to increase the number of persons currently under training by about 50 per cent. More up-to-date information may come out of the current UNDP/ACP/ECA joint study of statistical training needs for Africa.

27. Training at the middle level should normally be carried out at the national level and, as more qualified professional staff become available, this should form an integral part of the programme of national statistical services.

3.3 Technical, financial and other administrative problems encountered

28. Item 16 of the agenda for the third session of the Joint Conference deals specifically with selected issues and problems on the development of STPA. However, it would be useful to indicate here some of the problems encountered in the implementation of the programme. One of these relates to the non-availability of student fellowships for training at the STPA centres. It has been found that a

number of successful candidates could not join the centres because they could not obtain fellowships on time. This is often due to the fact that the national authorities, although they proclaim that statistics is among the priority areas, do not allocate adequate resources for statistical development and training, either from the national budgets or from the external resources made available to them. Another reason is that the procedures for fellowship applications take sometimes a long time and are not well known by the national statistical services and the candidates.

29. Another problem concerns the absence of proper manpower planning at the national level. Therefore the available estimates on statistical training needs may be far below or beyond the actual requirements. Appropriate surveys on statistical training needs should be undertaken periodically by the national statistical services. Such surveys should cover all sectors: Government, parastatal and private.

30. Several centres participating in the STPA are understaffed. In order to handle the larger numbers of trainees, it was estimated that the STPA centres will need to increase their teaching staff by more than 60 per cent. This reflects the awareness of the need to improve teaching quality and to develop research activities and possibly also to provide service courses for other departments of universities. This increase should be dealt with through the provision of adequate numbers of fellowships for training of trainers and the recruitment of lecturers and visiting lecturers to replace temporarily the fellows under training.

31. At the time the STPA was established, professional training was identified as the highest priority. While there is still an urgent need to increase the number of professional staff available to the national statistical services, it was found that the position concerning the middle level staff was worse in many countries. This is due to the fact that the countries of the region had not made the necessary efforts to establish or develop facilities for the training of middle-level personnel including in-service training at the national level.

3.4. Future directions

32. The report of the joint EEC/ACP/ECA Study of Statistical Training Needs for Africa will be available for the consideration of the Joint Conference. It is expected that the findings of the study will guide the future work under STPA.

33. In particular, African Governments are urged to translate into concrete action the priority that they give to statistics by allocating adequate resources, both from national and external sources, for financing national statistical development programmes, including training.

34. The various bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, interested in statistical training, should improve and facilitate their procedures for awarding fellowships, providing lecturers and visiting lecturers as well as equipment for the centres, assisting in the expansion of physical facilities as necessary, etc. Due attention should be given to the establishment and/or development of facilities at the national level for middle level training.

35. Finally, more emphasis should be put for the time being on the national projects to be established by Portuguese-speaking African countries, especially in connexion with the in-service statistical training.

36. The Joint Conference is invited:

(a) to consider the most effective way of mobilizing national and external resources for the expansion and improvement of statistical training;

(b) to advise on ways and means of making the courses at the STPA centres more relevant to the needs of the countries.

IV. Training of specialists in Demography

4.1. Objectives

37. There are two demographic training institutes in the region namely the Institut de Formation et de Recherche Demographiques (IFORD) located at Yaounde, Cameroon and the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) located at Accra, Ghana. The former serves the French speaking African countries whereas, the later serves the English speaking African countries. Both institutes were established in 1972 due to the acute shortage of persons with adequate training to undertake Demographic and Population related work in the Africa region. The basic objectives of the courses offered at these institutes are as follows:

(i) To give students a solid theoretical training in demography which will enable them to analyse and interprete demographic data;

(ii) To give students practical experience in data collection;

(iii) To give students an understanding of the interaction between population and economic and social development;

(iv) To introduce students to the tools of demographic research.

38. The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa continues to be fully responsible for the management of the two institutes, a responsibility it took over during 1980-1981, pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 32/179. The ammended statutes for both institutes were approved by the Eight Meeting of the Conference of Ministers held in Tripoli in April 1982 and by decision 37/444 of 21 December 1982 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The statutes provide for the regionalization of both institutes. Such regionalization is presently in progress.

4.2. Training facilities

39. At IFORD the main training activity continues to be a two year course leading to the Diplome d'Etudes Demographiques whilst at RIPS there is a one year course leading to a General Diploma in Demography followed by another one year course leading to a Master of Arts degree in Demography.

40. Between 1973 and 183, IFORD admitted 148 students. Out of this figure 133 successfully completed the two year course. During the period 1972 to 1982 RIPS admitted 276 students into the General Diploma course. Of this figure 201 successfully completed the one year diploma course. During the same period 81 of the successful diploma students were admitted into the Master of Arts Course. Of this figure 33 have been awarded the degree, 5 theses have been passed subject to revision, 9 theses have been submitted for examination and work is going on on 24 theses.

41. During the next four years IFORD plans to admit 20 students annually an average of less than one student annually from each of the 25 countries served by the institute. So far only 17 of these countries have had students trained at the institute.

42. During the next four years RIPS plans to admit 30 students annually into the General Diploma course and about ten students annually into the Master of Arts Course. Action has however been initiated to transform the General Diploma into a Master of Arts degree and the Master of Arts into a Master of Philosophy degree. RIPS has also received students from all the 19 English speaking African countries.

4.3. Other activities

43. IFORD organizes annually a training session which introduces participants to research methods. These participants are usually graduates from the two year IFORD diploma course. The training session lasts for one year and the students conduct individual research work under the supervision of more experienced demographers. Since 1976-1977 an average of three demographers have taken this training session each year.

44. IFORD also organizes at the national level short-term middle level courses lasting for about 6 weeks, on demography and social statistics. In addition to this IFORD organizes training sessions lasting for about 4 weeks, based on a particular theme which is of interest to demographers, working in African countries. Such courses can be seen as refresher courses which also give demographers the opportunity to present the results of research work they are engaged in. The first such training session was organized at IFORD in July 1981 and the second one in November 1982 in Bordeaux (France).

45. Lastly IFORD has since January 1979 published a tri-annual newsletter which disseminates information on demographic research work and related activities carried out in the region.

46. In addition to its normal training programme RIPS has assisted in the execution of ad hoc training programmes for middle level personnel in the countries it serves. It is hoped that each year two courses for the training of middle or lower level support personnel will be conducted in the countries. It is also planned that two courses for population experts which deal with specialized fields of population will be held each year. One such course was held in July 1983 with mortality as its theme.

47. RIFS has also been very active in the field of documentation and information dissemination. It publishes three newsletters and one abstract journal. The three newsletters give information on the work of the institute, on work going on in the population field in Africa and on developments in the Population Information and Documentation System for Africa (PIDSA). "PIDSA abstracts" a bi-annual abstracts journal is also published.

48. RIPS has also beenable to undertake advisory services to at least six African governments as well as to some international organizations like the World Health Organization and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

4.4. Problems encountered

49. IFORD has faced problems in the development of its research activities. This is because of the priority given to training and the lack of resources for research. Research at IFORD has also been hampered until now by the lack of data processing facilities. A solution to this problem is now being worked out. The institute needs greater financial resources as well as personnel to undertake research. In the coming years research work at IFORD would concentrate on the processing and analysis of the data collected from the urban surveys on infant and child mortality carried out in 5 African cities.

50. IFORD has also faced administrative and financial management problems. It is hoped that with the appointment of a competent administrative and finance officer the situation would improve.

51. At RIPS, both staff and students have had to contend with the difficult economic conditions in the host country. The lack of data processing facilities at the institute has hampered the training and research activities of the institute. The institute also needs greater financial and personnel resources to cope with its responsibilities in the areas of teaching, research, publishing, advisory services and information dissemination.

4.5. Prospects

52. For the future the institutes plan to continue with their training and research work. The need for personnel with training in population matters is still great in African countries. At present the institutes are being regionalized and it is expected that the member governments will contribute financially to the running of the institutes. However, the prospects do not seem very bright. In respect of IFORD only 5 of the 25 countries served by it have contributed to the institutes budget for the years 1982 and 1983. At RIPS, the regionalization process has been even slower and the new enlarged governing council has still not met. It is now scheduled to meet early in 1984. In addition to this the main funding source of the institutes, the United Nations Funds for Population Activities has decided to reduce its funding level of the institutes by about 19 per cent in 1984 in comparison with 1983. This will pose considerable problems to the functioning of the institutes. With the reduction in UNFPA funds and the low receipt of funds from the African countries, the institutes have found themselves in an increasingly precarious financial state. It is hoped that solutions will be found such that the future efficient functioning of the institutes is not jeopardized.

V. Conclusions

53. The principle of co-operation and collective self-reliance which African States have adopted recognizes in respect of human resources training and utilization that African countries must first help themselves individually and collectively in striving for survival and progress. Such goals could only be achieved through strong and unwavering support of African governments, both directly and indirectly, to the training of specialists inter-alia in the fields of planning, statistics and demography. African governments contributions to and support of the Pan-African institutions in charge of teaching and research in these fields not only is a national duty but also a most profitable investment for the African continent. African governments should also pay due attention to the training of middle level staff who are the backbone of the offices responsible for planning, statistics and demography. The number of staff needing training at this level is such that training facilities should be established and/or expanded wherever possible on a national basis to meet the demand.

54. However, international support in human resource development is also welcome as supplementary to the African self-reliant effort. Such assistance should be seen and regarded as reinforcing the national, regional and multinational human development efforts that African States must make in order to further development and progress. In this effort, the continued and active collaboration of all international agencies within the UN system and other international, inter-government and non-government bodies should be effectively mobilized in support of national subregional and regional effort for human resource development and utilization in the fields of planning, statistics and demography.